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If you have feedback about this article, would like to suggest a topic for future Internet Spotlight articles, have an interesting Internet resource to share, or if you just want to say hello, please feel free to e-mail the editors.

"Internet Spotlight" explores Internet and Web topics relevant to librarians in the public library sector. Your input is welcome.

Premium Web Tools for Public Libraries

We've actually had this column idea kicking around for quite a while, and we are pretty excited to finally talk about it. The idea came during a phone call where we were talking about the combination of value and efficiency that libraries have. We were trying to list as many ways as we could think of that the Internet had positively impacted library services and, at the same time, lowered costs, increased productivity, or at least saved money. Premium Web tools kept popping up in that heady conversation. Bingo, a perfect column topic!

So what do we pay for in terms of premium online services and, more importantly, what do we get from the money we spend? Well, some of the tools are primarily for work, while others are more personal. But as often happens online, there is a lot of work/personal overlap in our lists of premium tools. For example, Michael uploads lots of pretty pictures of food, travel destinations, and his toy poodle, Jetta, to Flickr. But he also regularly uploads pictures of library events, staff members, speaking gigs, conferences, and screen shots of library tech-related things, too. Similarly, David sees huge areas of overlap with the videos that he uploads. Yes, he does a ton of videos for his library, but he also has a slew of fun, personal videos as well. And while Netflix is a premium service many of us pay for yet can't use as a library resource, as you've read in previous columns, tools like Netflix point to future directions for library service and content delivery (at least in our estimation).

So, while many things might not immediately seem library- or work-related, chances are they actually have a pretty strong, legitimate connection. Though we have had some debate about whether Amazon Prime really counts unless you're using it to order things for work.

So with no further ado, here are our lists, followed by input from dozens

of other folks in Libraryland about what premium services they shell out extra money for online.

David's list of premium services: Flickr Pro, blip.tv, Vimeo, Jott, Remember the Milk, Tripit Pro, a plethora of iPhone apps and e-books, and LISHost.

Michael's list of premium services: Flickr Pro, Pandora, Animoto, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Kindle e-books (if those count), various apps and games for Palm Pre (likely to soon be replaced with an Android phone), World of Warcraft, LISHost, and DreamHost.

What exactly are we paying and why? Here's an explanation of a few of them:

- **Flickr Pro** (\$24.95 a year). Unlimited uploads, storage, sets, and collections. Access to your original files. Stats on your account. Ad-free browsing and sharing. HD playback for high-definition video uploads.
- **Blip.tv** (pro account is \$8 monthly; \$96 for a one-year subscription). Priority transcode access. Having a pro account lets you jump to the head of the queue, so the Flash version of your video will be ready faster. Transcode to multiple formats (like MP3 and M4V formats) automatically. Hidden videos—you can mark videos as "hidden," so they don't show up in blip.tv's indexes and searches, or in any RSS feeds. Only you and other registered users who you list as contacts can see your hidden videos. If you want to share the videos with other people who aren't blip.tv users, you can post them to an external site. Timed publishing—set a time at which it should become visible to everyone.
- **Jott** (\$3.95 a month for Jott assistant basic account).

Unlimited voice-to-text messages. Record a voice message up to fifteen seconds, and Jott will e-mail you a text version of the message.

- **Remember the Milk Pro** (\$25 a year). Priority support via e-mail. Ability to use the service with a smartphone app (David uses the iPhone app).
- **Tripit Pro** (\$69 a year). Itinerary monitoring and travel alerts. Alternate flights—get the best options for any flight problem. Point tracker—track your frequent-flyer miles and hotel points in one place. Inner Circle—automatically share every trip with key people.

While we hope it is helpful to see the premium services we use, Michael used Facebook to ask what other folks pay for. Much to our delight, the response was overwhelmingly strong. In fact, in less than two days we had dozens of people sharing all kinds of useful resources. Libraryland folks sure are helpful, eh? (*Editor's note:* The following comments have been reproduced as they appeared on Michael's Facebook wall. Some have been condensed for fit.)

Polly Farrington: I'm very likely to pay for a premium account with **Backupify** after my free trial expires.

Elizabeth Olesh: I pay for **Pandora**. Totally worth it.

Andrew K. Pace: **Pandora**, **LinkedIn** . . . and EVERY SINGLE kid's game sight . . . For little kids, look at things like **Pixie Hollow**, **Gogos crazy bones**, and **Wizards101** as examples.

Chris Peters: **Pandora**. Once they started a weekly limit for freeloaders, I ponied up. Also **Amazon Prime**.

Gwyneth Mibeck Stupar: **lynda.com**
Kelsey Smith: I pay for **flickr** and **netflix**, and don't regret a penny of either.

K.G. Schneider: **Flickr Pro**, **Amazon Prime**, and a slew of apps for my **iphone**. **Brewpal** is great! **Amazon Prime**... well, knowing I can get something half-price in 2 days is discipline enough. Really justifies itself if you are a heavy **Amazon** user.

Janie Hermann: I have yet to pay for **picnik** but I am thinking I might need to ante up soon as they have so many awesome add-ons. My subscriptions include **flickr pro** for 5+ years and I will never be without. I also subscribe to **phanfare** for my photos. **Amazon Prime** is totally worth it too – I can't imagine life without it.

Charlotte Canelli: How about **Pandora** Internet radio . . . there's nothing like a custom list created for you.

Melora Ranney Norman: I love **Wikispaces Private Label**—use it for all sorts of things in the library and in the classroom.

Lisa Worrell: I only pay for **Flickr** and will always renew. I've paid for **Picnik** in the past, and while the pay features are good, their free site is enough to suit my purposes.

Polly Farrington: Has anyone mentioned **LibraryThing**? I paid for a lifetime membership. And considering paying for **Backblaze** service, to protect me from me.

Quite a list, eh? Thanks again to all the folks who contributed resources to the list. If you have or find others, drop us a line. We always love hearing from folks reading the column. ☺



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